

1861

# An Autobiography of Abner Hill, Pioneer Preacher of Tennessee, Alabama and Texas

Abner Hill

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## N. L. Howard.

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... ..

ABILENE, TEXAS

He Being Dead Yet Speaketh--- Heb. 11:4

Being now a little over 73 years of age, my time in this life can not be long and being influenced by the above passage of scripture, I write, hoping that it may be with me as it was with righteous Abel - that after I am dead I may still speak.

#### CHAPTER I. On Childhood.

I was born in Rocking ham County, in the state of North Carolina, on the 20th day of August 1788. My father's name was Thomas Hill. He was the son of William Hill. He was the son of William Hill. Of what County I am not advised, only I have heard my father say that he was of Welsh extraction. My Mother's name was Katherine Shropshire, the daughter of Winkfield Shropshire from England. He lived to be very old - I reckon over a hundred years. He had thirteen children by his first wife. She died. He lived awhile with one of his daughters who was married and had a family. Living with her was a girl by the name of Jane Jones of Virginia. My grandfather married Jane Jones, she being fifteen years old. By her my grandfather had thirteen children, making in all twenty-six children by his two wives. My mother, I think, was the seventh child by his last wife. I was my mother's third child. When I was old enough to go to school, my grandfather was the teacher. He was then able to walk home six miles, on Sundays.

When I was too young to remember, my father removed from the State of North Carolina to the State of Georgia. My mother's people, the Shropshires, moved to the State of Georgia, and my father went with them. Georgia was then a new country. My

father sold his land in the State of North Carolina for horses and cattle and drove them to the State of Georgia. His horses and mares all died except one little bay filly and the cattle died all except one heifer. This left us very poor, father having only money enough to buy 70 acres of land. Elijah, James and I and William were born in the State of North Carolina. Jane, Winkfield, Hannah, Thomas, and Cinthia came in close succession, so that father and Mother were much crowded with children. In consequence of this I was raised poor. I am of the opinion that it was a good thing for me, as this qualified me to bear the adversities of life with patience.

My father was a member of the Baptist church and a believer of the baptist doctrine. Mother was a faithful teacher, teaching me that there was a heaven, a place of everlasting happiness and a place of punishment where we would be sent, when we died if we lived wicked lives. She taught us that if we lived good God would take us to heaven where we would be forever happy. She taught us it was wicked to tell a lie, to steal, to get mad and fight and to curse and swear. Swearing we had learned from my Uncle Shropshires, who used profane language. I believed mother. I understood that she was religious and thought she knew all about it. I was deterred from doing wrong from the belief that mother had taught us. I had never heard anybody pray. I was desirous of knowing how to pray, but I was ashamed to ask mother to teach me how to pray. We lived on the frontier. There were some alarming reports of Indians. Mother was afraid of Indians. This caused me to be much afraid. There were considerable negroes in the country. It was feared that they would mutiny. My mother was very much afraid of this.

This also alarmed me and I dreamed one night that the negroes had risen and surrounded our house in the night. I thought I broke to run but a large negro caught me. I told him I was in fun: That I would join them. I thought they believed me. We went on. I broke to run again. The negro caught me again. I told him again I was in fun. I thought he drew a large butcher knife saying that he had better kill me than be betrayed. He raised his knife to kill me and I screamed so loud that it woke me up. I was in a perfect tremor. I truly suffered with fear. In all cases where it was reported that the negroes were going to rise and kill the whites, women and children have seemed to be more affrighted than on any other subject. I have long thought that it might be good national policy to get rid of our negro population.

In the State of Georgia in the summer there arises many thunder clouds. They roar and gather and thunder very much. Mother was very much alarmed when one of these thunder clouds would arise. This very much alarmed me. I have at difference times when a large thunder cloud would arise run down behind the peach orchard and fall on my knees and prayed. Although I never had heard any one pray, still it seems to me now that I prayed a pretty good prayer. I confessed my sins before the Lord. I promised to do better. I asked the Lord to forgive us and save us from the storm. The influence that a mother has over a child is most wonderful. Therefore, females who are to become mothers should become qualified in early life how to teach and influence their children for righteousness. Mothers have to desire to teach their children anything but what is right. Thus, mothers should be so qualified as to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

My Uncle Amoschiren were very wicked. They fell into the opinion that there was no hell. My oldest brother, Elijah, received the belief

that there was no hell. I still believed what mother had told me - that there was a hell of fire. One night, father being from home, we got to talking with mother and she admitted that she did not believe there was any real fire in hell: that she supposed it was figurative language: that hell was a place of banishment and darkness, away from God, and therefore compared to fire. I reasoned that if there is no real fire in hell there will be no real suffering or misery in hell. There are many wicked there and there would be plenty of company, and if it is dark and the wicked are banished from God, it would not be lonesome. My neighbor, John Jackson, had four children, about our size. We played hide and seek in the new house and we had rare fun. Mother said the saved were always singing and happy in heaven. I thought I would get tired of singing. I had never got tired of playing in the dark, so I concluded that on the whole, I had as soon go to hell as to heaven. I found that this state of mind had a powerful influence upon me. I could swear without remorse when absent from father or mother; I felt that I would as soon be wicked as not. This had a bad effect upon me. It made me sometimes feel afraid that I was wrong. One night I dreamed that I had to go to hell. It was there before me, a large pile of firey coals, some three rods broad, about three feet high and in the middle a round blue blaze which glimmered all over it. In a short time I was to be put into the fire. I thought that I engaged in raking up with my hands a large body of wet leaves and trash to have it ready. The time came. They seized me to put me in. I gathered up my arms full of this wet trash. When they brought me to the edge of the fire I threw on my wet load. It instantly caught in a great blaze. I struggled and screamed and awoke. I never was so scared. It was so plain, that I lay and reflected that my Heavenly Father

has caused me to dream this dream to show me that I was wrong in my idea of hell. I have ever since considered it safe to take the inspired word just as it reads. If Universalism, if Deism, if Swedenburgism, if Shakerism, if Mormonism, if Twoseedism, if Immediate Spiritual Operatism - if any of them are true, he that believes what God's Inspired Word says, and humbly and faithfully obeys it, is safe.

About this time Father joined the Baptist church and was baptized in the Ocona River, in Greene County, Georgia, perhaps two miles above the skull shoals. This was the first immersion I ever saw. They sung and sang at the water:

What think you my friends of the preaching of John  
Saying, was it from heaven or was it from man.

That night after father was baptised, my brother and I were at play as usual. Mother said, boys, come into the house. We went in. She said take off your hats and sit down, your father is going to duty. Duty, thought I, what can that mean, I will wait and see. Father was sitting at the table with a lighted candle and a hymn book in his hand. Presently, he read over a hymn. Mother and he sang it, father giving out the lines. Then they knelt down and father engaged in a vocal prayer. I listened carefully to the words as I was desirous of learning how to pray. Father kept up the practice of family prayer. It had a powerful influence on me. The words, the language, the ideas and form of prayer would often run through my mind. I seemed to become sensible of the frailty of man: that we were flesh and blood: that the spirit must soon leave the body.

The Baptist preacher would now come home with father and mother from church meeting and at night have meeting at our house. There was a report prevailing that on Sunday morning, the day of our monthly meeting, that the world would be at an end. Saturday night, there

was a meeting at our house. After preaching, I was much distressed, thinking about the world coming to an end and I not being prepared. I lay on the floor and after all had gone to sleep I lay and prayed and vowed to do better and serve the Lord. Suddenly, it seemed to me that I was instantly raised up about six feet high. I was filled with gladness. I felt like praising God. I reflected, is this religion, is this an expression of grace? I had heard some experiences given in church, but I did not recollect any that was like this.

I conclude this chapter by a few thoughts upon the early training of children: (omitted)

## CHAPTER 2, On the Period of Youth.

When I grew up to be a lad, perhaps 14 years old, there were four boys of us able to do good work. A man in the neighborhood (named) by the dollars a month (sic). I performed to full satisfaction. In the summer I was hired to gather fodder. I got praise for faithful work. When done, I went home. Mother praised me and said that I had got a good name. This made me feel like I was rather better than the other boys. I was rather insolent and Father gave me a small whipping. This made me mad as fury and I went muttering into the kitchen, saying to myself, I can live without him, I am not going to be whipped like a dog. I thought I would run away the first chance. Father overheard me, and came in with a large heavy switch. He fell on me with it and I finally thought he was going to kill me - I thought he never was going to quit. But he did not let me go until I was fully a sound boy - I had no notion of running away, and I never had afterwards any intention of running away. I thought if I was to run away that



father would follow me and whale me to death. This, I think, though rough, was a great favor bestowed on me by my father. If I had been tampered with it is more than likely that I would have run away and been my ruin. When I was in young company I would indulge in fun and wickedness and when I would be alone I would have great remorse of conscience, which would make me feel quite unhappy. One Saturday evening, I was going on a visit to be among wicked company. I was thinking about what was before me: that I should likely do wrong and that my conscience would lash me for it. I thought it was hard that I could not take any pleasure without suffering for it. I felt dissatisfied with it. I wished that it was not so. I went on and had a great deal of fun and past time and did and said many things that I knew were wrong. I did not feel any sensible remorse of conscience. I had to ride home alone Sunday evening some six miles. I could not feel any remorse of conscience. I recollected the thoughts and desires I had had on Saturday and it alarmed me. I feared I was grieving the Spirit of God Paul taught at Athens: that we receive of God life and breath and all things, so it seems that the conscious impressions made upon us by the spirit of truth, of which Christ says that it is the Holy Ghost (or Spirit), which shall reprove the world of sin, etc., are connected with the agency of God and he will with-  
draw them at pleasure. ...

We removed from the State of Georgia into East Tennessee in 1816 and stopped among our relations, the Hill connections. There was a Baptist church some three miles from us. Father and mother joined the Baptist Church. I attended pretty regularly at their monthly church meetings. A few years before, there had been a great revival of religion and nearly all the young people in the region around had joined the Baptist Church. The old men wore round top, flat hats, straight breasted coats, long jackets and round toed

shoes. Old women wore long waisted habits. The above described fashion had been pretty much the fashion of dress, that both the old and young had worn. The young people now began to follow the new fashion. The young men wore bell round hats, gallusses and coats with lapels and sharp toed shoes. The young women wore the shemee, a dress bound just under the arms with a draw string. The revival had ceased. The brethren seemed cold. Some of the old members thought it was caused by the pride of the younger members. Others attributed it to jealousy and coldness of these old members to the young members. The matter was introduced into the church. The members were divided. They disputed about dress for about six months at every church meeting, and finally, the part that was in favor of the young membership had the majority. They excluded the old members that had formerly complained. They staid (sic) out about a year and finally all came back, acknowledged they were wrong, joined the church with the exception of a great uncle of mine, Thomas Bridges, my grandmother's brother. He obstinately staid out and died so. When I reflect about it now, I think how foolish they were to fall out about nothing. But we can<sup>not</sup> expect better things from a people who pay so little attention to the word of God.

While plowing one day, I came unexpectedly upon the subject of religious condition. I had often vowed to serve the Lord and had talked so long that I had become discouraged. I was fearful that I had committed the unpardonable sin. I felt very bad. My mind was gloomy. After a while I concluded to pray for pardon and that the Lord might show me whether there was any chance for me. While kneeling down in prayer I thought that I felt relief and comfort. I thought at the time that I would certainly try to join the church. But I had no experience of grace. Uncle Thomas Gibbons, who married Aunt Polly Hill, father's youngest sister, lived out on Roaring River, in

what afterwards became Overton County. He had fallen over a cliff some thirty-five feet high and dislocated his hip, driving his thigh bone up his back bone. He sent James Isaam out to father's in the fall to get one of his boys to go out and attend to his business that winter. I was chosen to go. The distance I think is about 100 miles. When I got to Uncle Thomas Gibbons, I went one night to a corn husking. There was quite a company of young men and boys present. To pass away the time and for amusement it was proposed that he at one end of the corn pile should sing a song; and the next, and go around, until every one had sung. When it came to me I excused myself and they asked "Cant you sing at all." I would not tell a lie. "Do you not know any funny songs." I had learned many when a boy from my Uncle Shropshires. I yielded to the voice. While I was singing there were frequent outbursts of laughter. That was the greatest song yet. They must hear that again. There must be more where that came from. My conscientious feeling left me and I sung several of the funniest songs I knew. I became a high fellow with the boys. That night I could not sleep soon. Oh, I had broke my promise. I had plunged again into sin. I could not complain if the Lord killed me. I felt like I deserved to die. I could only humbly trust in the Lord for mercy. A feeling of happiness and comfort sprung up and I felt like praising the Lord. I felt relieved. This to me was evidence of the Lord's pardoning mercy. I resolved to live right. Next spring, father and brother James came out. We went down south, about forty miles, into what afterwards became white county upon the Sandy Fork of the Cumberland River and there father selected a place to move. I, with brother, James went down to make an improvement for the family to move to in the fall. That spring, I unthoughtedly bet on my own shooting. This, on reflection I thought was wrong. I con-

cluded that the only way for me to succeed in living right was to join the Church, but I had had no experience of grace like I had heard others tell and like I had heard the Baptist preachers tell in their preaching, but as it seemed that I would not live right out of the church, I decided to try it. I borrowed brother James' pony and rode up 40 miles to Uncle Thomas Gibbons, there being no Baptist church nearer than the part where he lived. He and Aunt Polly were members. Father was there at the church meeting on Saturday when the door was opened for any one to come forward and join, by telling an experience of Grace. I went forward immediately. The going up was such a cross that I hardly seemed to know what position I was in. I told what I had to tell. Only one question was asked me by Nimrod Dodson, who was a leading member of the church, namely, "Did you ever see that it just in God to send you to hell"? I answered yes, for I knew it would not do to answer no, though I knew at the time that I had not had an extra-ordinary view, only as I believed the general system of Bible truth. If I could have said that I had a sense that I was a hell deserving sinner or that I had seen myself hair hung over hell, these sage Baptists would have liked it better, but I would not in truth tell any such things. I was unanimously received and the right hand of fellowship give me. On Sunday, I was baptised by Thomas McBride in Blackberry Fork of Roaring River in the presence of quite a large congregation. That night I felt serene and comfortable. Next morning when I started back to Caney Fork father went a piece with me and counseled me to be watchful and not do wrong. In the fall I went with father and brother James to Claiborne County in East Tennessee to move the place out. Three young people by the names of James, John and Mary Cartlett moved out with us. They were two brothers and a sister. Their father died when they were children. Their father, Joseph

Bartlett, married again, and they were raised by their grandmother Sims. When I went into East Tennessee I acted rather rudely. Mother cautioned me which had a good effect on me. In moving to Caney Fork, Sally Bartlett and I got acquainted, became attached to each other and in December we were married. Some time in the next November my son, Joshua B. Hill was born. In the next December, my dear wife Sally died. She took cold which affected her seriously and in vain did her old Aunt Lucy Chisholm, mother and old Molly Fitzgerald use their best efforts to relieve her. She died December 8, 1808. Joshua, her little son, was a little over a year old when his mother died. I have warm hopes that although she was never baptized she went to Paradise. She was a humble, upright, loving woman. Raised by her ignorant old grandmother, she could only write a little and read a little. She believed in the baptist teaching. According to her honest belief, she might be ever so humble, honest, faithful, and upright and spiritually minded, still she had to wait for an experience of grace before she could be correctly baptized. We Baptists at that time did not have any belief in the gospel testimony, Mark 16-16, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved". etc. ...

Although my dear wife Sally could read, she was a ignorant of the gospel truths as though they had not been in the Bible, - caused by baptist traditions. Her unavoidable ignorance justified her. Romans 5-13 "Sin is not imputed where there is no law". Acts 17-30 etc. ... Sally did not know the gospel requirement for her to be baptized. Thence she did not sin in neglecting it. I was so anxious to see her after death that I went to her grave in the dusk of the evening in the hope of seeing her spirit. I entirely failed in this. I do not doubt she reports that the spirits of dead persons were near their graves. Since that time I have been making inquiry for

haunted grave yards and haunted houses and I have never been able to find one and I am of the opinion there is no such thing as for us in the body to see the spirit of a dead person. It was all come from the fruitful imagination of the poor weak creature, man. Neither have I any further evidences of there being witches, such as were much spoken of when I was a boy. It was thought they could be with people - be with and ride them after night when they were asleep, shoot their balls into cattle and kill them without breaking the skin, etc, etc. This, I now think is all false imagination. I remained single until September 10th, when I was married to a woman by the name of Katherine Cotton. She was a zealous, fasting, shouting, jerking methodist. It was common in those days for the people to have the jerks. Both religious and irreligious persons had it.

The first time I ever saw any person with the jerks was while I lived with Uncle Thomas Gibbons. He had a negro girl called Pat. She had the jerks one day when Uncle Thomas and aunt were away from home. I wanted to see Pat jerk. She was spinning at the wheel. I kept teasing her to jerk. When she commenced jerking she awfully scared me. She flew around the floor, making chairs and everything fairly roar. She got in to the middle of the floor, jerking forward and backward, making her head nearly touch the floor, Every jerk she gave a grunt which might have been heard perhaps fifty yards. It seemed to me that she might kill herself. The time seemed long to me before she quit. She at last fell down on the floor, drawing her face and knees together and lay still for some time before she seemed to come to. It scared me so that I never tried to get Pat to jerk again. At this time jerks were common. The exercise was pretty much the same. They said they could not help it. I suppose it must be some uncommon excitement. It was thought strange that the jerks so seldom hurt any one.

I became acquainted with a Baptist preacher by the name of John Mulkey. He had been generally moderator of the Baptist Association. He was a rigid Calvinist. He became on friendly terms with a Christian preacher by the name of Lewis Byrom. They agreed to have a friendly talk upon their difference of belief. When they met, it was at night. Byrom said to Mulkey, "Let us pray for the blessing of God to be upon us in our convention, and brother Mulkey, please lead us in Prayer". They knelt down. Byrom prayed in which he clearly expressed the great advantage of believing the truth of God and the great evil of carelessly failing to believe and do right according to the revealed truth of God. Byrom so prayed that he greatly removed Mulkey's prejudice. The result of their conversation was that Mulkey became doubtful of the truth of Calvinism, examined, became convinced, threw the hard system away, took the word of God as his guide, the name of Christian as the inspired name, and so lived and died.

After Mulkey had reformed, but before he formally left the Baptist church, I was at a Baptist association. Mulkey was moderator and as he read the church letters the tears ran down his cheeks. His voice seemed full of humanity and love. His countenance seemed to beam with the spirit. It formed in my heart a love for him that I have never felt for any other man save Jesus Christ. I have often thanked my Heavenly Father for Mulkey's influence upon me that day, believing that it was the first thing that moved my Baptist prejudice.

Before the next association, we got news that Brother Mulkey had left the Baptists. It hurt me worse than if twenty other preachers had left us. I wanted to see him. I thought I could convince him that he was wrong. For next association I was appointed delegate



from our Church to be held in the Stockton Valley in Kentucky. I was disappointed in seeing Mulkey there. Several things that took place in this trip had an influence to cool me toward most of the leading Baptist preachers: 1. They drank too much whiskey. 2. They seemed entirely unfriendly toward anyone who doubted the truth of their hard system of doctrine, 3. As we returned home some of the leading members and a leading preacher disagreed and had a <sup>hard</sup> quarrel.

For the next association, I was appointed by the Sinking Rock Church, of which I was a member, as a delegate. Mulkey had sent on a string of appointments. The day before he was to preach at the Rocky River meeting house, he passed by father, where I was ready to join his company. Mulkey was talking with a Baptist preacher by the name of Jack Green. I threw in a word, Mulkey replied, and Green drove off. I offered the best arguments I could. He did not say much. We outrode the company and got alone. After I was through with my arguments, Mulkey took up my strongest arguments, showed that they were wrong, held forth the Gospel testimony for Christians meeting together, said it was his intention to labor for the union of all christians and remarked how happy he was in this. Conviction seized my mind. It must be right and if so, the Baptist are wrong. To admit it possible for the Baptists to be wrong in anything seemed to make my head swim. I had always believed the Baptists were right in everything. We went on to his appointment and I heard him preach. Oh, it was most interesting. That night, Thomas McBride, our pastor, was to preach. He tried, but could not, and had to quit. Mulkey got up and Oh, if he did not preach. I thought it was more interesting than anything I had ever heard. At the Association, next day, Reuben Elison preached the introductory sermon. His text was first Samuel, 15 "What meaneth then the bleating of those sheep in mine ear and the lowing of the oxen which I hear". An odd text, truly.



Saul had disobeyed the command of the Lord in not killing these oxen and sheep. Their lowing and bleating were evidences of Saul's guilt at it afforded a text for our cross-eyes brother, Ellison to preach upon for the introductory sermon. On Monday the people wanted Mulkey to preach at the stand. The Association would not give him leave and he did not preach. A member from Mill Creek Church, where Mulkey held, inquired what was to be done with John Mulkey's credentials, saying that he was excluded but still held his credentials with the Baptists. He said that he had demanded them, but that Mulkey had refused to give them up. Mulkey then stepped forward and said: "You know, Brother, that I told you I was willing to give up the papers, if you would make out your church record correctly. We had labored for six months to agree and we could not agree. Brethren, if we can not agree, let us part in peace. This was agreed upon, but you made out your church record: 'Excluded for heresy, John Mulkey and a large majority of the church'. This was an incorrect record, for there was no act of exclusion, but we agreed to part in peace. If you will make out a record of facts you can have the papers, I do not care anything for them." A majority of the Association said it was a correct record, although I did not so give my vote.

About this time which was in 1810, our Pastor, Thomas McBride, introduced the question into the church, whether or not it was not right for all God's children to sit down together at the Lord's table. I said No. I tried to argue against it, but could not recollect any scripture to condemn it. I thought by the next monthly meeting I would be able to lay it cold. I read the New Testament through, but did not find my proof. I thought I had read in too much of a hurry. I read it over again. I had not found it. I then commenced reading to see what the Book did say. I could not find what

I had always heard the Baptist teach: that it was wrong for any but Baptists in good standing to sit down at the Lord's table. By the next meeting I was prepared to sit and say nothing. The more I examined, the more certain I was that all the Lord's people should sit down at his table and none else. The church investigated this question for six months. About half contended for Christian union and communion, and the other half held to the old baptist doctrine of close communion. We parted in peace and so made out the church record.

About this time there were quite a number of Baptist preachers who left the Baptist communion. Namely John Mulkey, Philip Mulkey, his brother, Old Martin Trap, Young Martin Trap. William Randolph, Thomas McBride, Thomas Stone, Gorde Stone, his brother . These were distinguished preachers from the Baptist Church. There were from the Presbyterians, Barton W. Stone, John Bowman. Other distinguished preachers stood connected with us, namely, Benj. Linn, Lewis Byrom, Wm. Kincade, David McGaha, Daniel Travis, Ephriam D. Moore, John Davis, Elihu Randolph, Robert Randolph, Abner Peeler, and others that I can not now recollect. Brother Alexander Campbell was not then known among us. He was first known among us as the great Champion of the Baptist by his debate with Walker and then by this debate with Maccauly (?). We had a great revival and in-gathering and many preachers arose among us, namely, Jos. McBride, Isaac McBride, Andrew McBride, brothers to Thos. McBride, the old preacher. Wm. D. Jourdan, Benj. Hall, Asbury Stone, Levi Nichols, M. W. Matthews, Samuel Giles, and Tolbert Fanning - all of whom were workmen that needed not to be ashamed, also Thacher Griffen, Alfonzo Griffin, two brothers, James Anderson, Wm. Hooton, son of the old one-eyed Christian preacher, John Hooton. These all rose up and labored in the upper part of Middle Tennessee. I feel called upon to offer a  
tribute/ of respect to Barton W. Stone. I was intimately acquainted with him,

having traveled with him in preaching. He was great in humility, undeviating in honesty, of extensive learning, with unabating zeal and piety, fearlessly plain and independent. Possessed of extensive learning, of a deep and quick penetration, he ever earnestly contended for the faith. He was one of the first and great pioneers of the great christian reformation of the 19th Century. His ways and manner reminded me of what we read of Old Abraham, the father of the faithful.

My second dear wife, Katy, resolving to renounce the name Methodist, and from henceforth to take the Gospel name, Christian, and instead of the Methodist discipline, to be governed by the plain word of Inspiration, and believing that the gospel taught immersion, was immersed. When she was going to be baptized, as she had the phthisic, my mother was fearful that it would essentially injure her, but she was baptised and no visible injury was realised. I have often observed since that where sickly persons were baptised, they they did not realize any harm.

I settled and improved a small domicile and followed preaching. It was not long since the earthquakes <sup>1811</sup> had shaken the earth and much alarmed the people. Preaching and exhorting had a powerful effect. I had night meetings some where every night in the week. One evening the cows failed to come up to be changed before we went to meeting. Late in the night we came home and were going to drive the cows in the moonlight. I saw something like a chunky person like a white sheet around it. I thought it must be a spirit. With much alarm, I went slowly the 60 yards that it was from me, when, behold, it was a white steer with his hind parts to me. Had I been so alarmed that I had not gone to it, I would have reported that I certainly saw a spirit.

I was young and did not understand language or scripture, though I had a strong voice and great zeal. Still I made a poor out at preaching. My wife said that she was ashamed of me and that if I did not

quit trying to preach that she would quit going to meeting. This much discouraged me, but as I thought I had evidence that I was <sup>of God</sup> divinely called/to preach, I prayed and looked to God and seemed to get the victory. I concluded to ride a circuit. I fixed for my wife to stay with her sister, Sallie, my brother Wm. Hill's wife, and I started on a circuit with Elihu Randolph, who was then a single man. He had been riding two or three years and was a pretty good young preacher. In the first round we met with Brother Ephriam D. Moore, who was one of our great young preachers. He had come from East Tennessee Circuit to marry Sister Polly Wardlaw. This put my comrade, Elihu Randolph, in the notion of marrying. He married Sister Polly Garrett and did not go with me another round on the circuit. I continued to ride and get acquainted with the brethren. I had the reading of a variety of books, I had the smiles and encouragement of the brethren, and I was at an age to improve. On that circuit, I got acquainted with Brother Jos Matthews, "the father of my present wife, Nancy, and her brother, M. W. Matthews, when they were small children. I went with Brother Marshal D. Spain to look at North Alabama and concluded to remove there. I quit riding the circuit, made arrangements, and removed to North Alabama when it was anew unsettled country.

South of the Tennessee River I lost my port hogs as we moved on. After we had built a home I went back to hunt for them. About 20 miles back, I found some of my hogs day, and lay alone on a cane branch. I had a good gun and a stout resolute and fierce dog, and was not at all afraid. I hobbled my mare and hunted all day on foot, but found no more of my hogs. I went upon the point of a knob to listen for turkeys. When I thought of going down where I ~~xx~~ slept the night before - a sudden and very uncommon chilly feeling struck me. It began at the top of my head and like a wave of water ran slowly down

to the end of my fingers and toes. It drew my attention and decidedly I had never felt anything like it before. It is nothing, but imagination, I thought, I will not mind it. I got a piece of pine to make a light and started again, and it came on me with double force. It made me shiver all over. Surely, thought I, it is a warning to me not to stay all night where I did last night. I said it is nothing I will not mind it. It seemed to come on me with still greater force. Well, thought I, I will try it and if it leaves me, I will not stay there. I threw down my pine. It entirely left me. I went down and got my mare and went to Big Nance Creek and stayed all night. I have regarded it as a providential warning from my heavenly father. This with other circumstances has caused me to look and trust in God for life and breath and all things, Acts 17-25. After I had procured a good piece of land in Alabama, brother William and I together, I was inclined to followi preaching; I had a good farm, a good house, good water, good health, good neighbors, horses, cattle, and hogs, and a good prospect for living independent. After awhile my house will decay, my fence rot down, I grow old and have to die. What shall I do to lay up treasure in heaven. I read 1st Corinthians 3-8 Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 11th verse. Christ is the only foundation. If any man shall build upon this foundation, men and women gospely converted, compared to gold, silver precious stone. Verse 12. He shall receive a reward. Daniel 1-12-3. They that are wise shall shine as the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever. I determined to give up my worldly prospects and to do all I could to turn people to righteousness. I gave up the farm and horses to Brother William Hill, who had a sale and sold on a credit my horses, cattle and hogs, reserving two horses for myself and wife to ride.

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My wife not having any child, I followed traveling preaching through the prime of my life. I have the comforting recollection that many through my instrumentality were turned to righteousness. This to me, now in old age, is a much greater comfort than if I had while in the prime of life, labored for earthly treasure.

While traveling, I preached at Old Brother Alford Wilson's on Duck River. The Lord blessed my labors and a goodly number turned to him. At Catheys Creek in Maury County my labors were blessed. In Hickman County, many professed faith in Christ and I baptized them in Mill Creek. If I was to relate the particulars of my preaching incidents it would swell these writings to a large volume. But as he who holds the rewards of the faithful in reversion, knows all things, I leave it for him to decide what good I was instrumental in doing and will record only a few particulars.

At Bethlehem in White County I was at a protracted meeting. Brother Elihu Randolph was there. He opposed the doctrine of baptism being for the pardon of sins. This doctrine was preached by Brother John Mulky and myself. Strange that any man who believes the gospel should oppose a doctrine so plainly taught therein. Father and mother and most of my religious brothers and sisters were at the meeting. On the Lord's Day it was assigned to me to administer the Lord's Supper. I had an unusual solemn weight on my mind. In my remarks, I showed: 1. That the Lord required all his children to witness for him in this Supper - This do etc., 1st Corinthians 11-25. Drink ye all of it, Matthew 26-27. 2. That we were to examine ourselves, 28th verse. 3. If unworthy persons went to the Lord's table that it did not excuse us from duty. When the Lord's supper was instituted, Judas partook. Matthew 26-25-26. 4. The Supper was to divide between the Lord's children and the children of the devil.

When the way was opened, mother took her seat with us at the Lord's table. We had truly a happy time. Mother was a Baptist and as such had violated the Baptist rules. Some of the other members wanted to eat with the Christians but it was denied them. They said Old Sister Hill took the Lord's Supper with the Christians away last year. Mother was asked why she did it. She said she thought the Lord required it of her to eat with her Christian children. If the brethren will bear with you for this violation of our rules, will you promise Sister Hill not to do so any more. I can not promise brethren, said mother, for if I was to feel as I did that day, I should do it again. But sister Hill, it is a violation of rules, said they. Mother said, I do not think those rules are right. Why Sister Hill, Paul says, I will eat no meat while the world stands rather than cause my brother to offend. My mother said I do not think Paul meant that we should not go to the Lord's table. They laid the matter over until the next church meeting for her to consider, but she could not make an acknowledgment. After waiting a number of months and she could not see that she had done wrong, when they were going to turn mother out, father arose and said: "The old woman and I have lived together in the church for a long time and I don't like your rules very well any how and you may take my name off." There now said the preacher. They turned mother out and took father's name off their book. Father and mother stayed out for several years until old Brother Simmons, a free will Baptist preacher, made up a church in the neighborhood, and they joined him, and lived and died in the Baptist church. My pious old father and mother, with many others, I fear, idolize the name of Baptist. It is passing strange that any one who loves the Saviour and professes to be married to Christ, should prefer any other name than the of Christ or the Divinely inspired name, Christian:



The bride that her husband would honor  
 Delights to be called by his name  
 And surely disgrace is upon her  
 The name of another to claim.

I will here relate an anecdote. Old Brother Weaver, a Baptist, and Old Brother Philpot, a professed Christian, were together at a meeting. Old Brother Weaver said: Brother Philpot, I am a Baptist. Brother Philpot said: Brother Weaver, I am a Christian. Brother Weaver said, Brother Philpot, I have been over forty years a Baptist. Brother Philpot said I have been over forty years a Christian. Brother Weaver said, I glory in the name of Baptist. Brother Philpot said, I glory in the name of Christian. Brother Weaver said, I hope to die a Baptist. Brother Philpot said, I hope to die a Christian, with me the name of Christian is of Divine Authority, See Acts 11-22. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem and them sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch, who, when he had come, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and faith, and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that for a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church and taught much people. And the Disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. There observe 1. That Barnabas was sent to Antioch by the Church at Jerusalem, the fountain of gospel authority, Isaiah 2-3, for out of Zion shall go forth (th) the law of the Holy Ghost or Spirit. 2. He went to Tarsus and brought Saul to Antioch. Paul was called of God to be the Great Apostle to the gentiles. Part of the disciples at Antioch were gentiles and part were jews. 3. The name Christian swallowed up all party names. Division is wrong, John 17-21. 1st Corinthians,



1-10. He that is so prejudiced as to deny the plain inspired testimony, will deny any gospel truth that condemns his favored human dogma.

### CHAPTER 3

The Baptists of every character, who glory in and call themselves by the name of Baptist, are not reproached with any invidious name. The Methodists of every standing, North and South, are suffered to wear the name of their choice, and in which they glory without any reproachful name being thrown upon them. It is also the same with all ranks of Presbyterians and all other denominations who call themselves by uninspired party names. After we took the Christian, directly we were called Schismatics. Was it not enmity in the heart of him who first invented it against the name of Christian and those who wrote it, that caused the using of this invidious and reproachful name Schismatic. Was it not wicked in him who threw it upon us. Some twenty years afterward, our distinguished brother Alexander Campbell united with us, and soon they turned the tables upon us and called us Campbellites. Why was this done. No intelligent Christian ever sentimentally called himself a Campbellite. Why? Because all intelligent Christians know that Alexander Campbell was not crucified for us nor were we baptised in the name of Alexander Campbell. Hence we consider the name of Campbellite as thrown upon us, equally malicious, equally invidious, equally reproachful, with the name Schismatic. We esteem brother Alexander Campbell as a truly great and we hope a good man and a true Christian. But the greatest man, except Jesus Christ, is only a poor imperfect human being. Brother Alexander Campbell's indefatigable labor and great success in promoting pure, primitive, gospel truth and gospel practice, will waft his name to

it will do me any good to baptize me in that creek, I want you to do it. I replied, Gillington, you can read; does it not read that way to you. We read: Jesus went straightway up out of the water. Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and he baptised him and coming up straightway out of the water. It also says, we are buried with him in baptism. Does it not read that way to you? He replied, these scriptures to me, do not refer to the mode of baptism, but if you think they do and that it will do me any good, I want you to baptize me in that creek. Gillington, said I, if you yourself have no faith in it, it will not do you any good. I will here relate two circumstances in relation to baptism. (This has been omitted in this copy.)

I will now relate some on the subject of getting religion. Old Squire Durrett, an old Christian told me as follows: When I was a young man I joined the Methodists as a seeker of religion. I had been seeking religion for some two years and had not found it. I was at a large camp meeting. The Alter was divided by poles, one side for the men and the other for the women. A man who had a very fine voice was engaged in preaching. I was lying in the straw on the men's side of the alter. His subject was rather funny, being that of a fox hunted by a dog. The spirit was the dog and the sinner was the fox. He compared the shiftings of the sinner to the cunning windings of the fox. I lay and listened and thought I have been long waiting and the spirit does not catch me. The fox is keeping out of the way of the dog, for if he falls into the strong jaws of the dog, he will fare badly. If the spirit should catch me, would I realize something similar? But the sinner escaped from the spirit. But, said the preacher, he will overtake you in the day of judgment. But many of you are like



the Irishman that stole the man's pig. The Irishman said, Man, I did not do it. The man said yes, you did, and you'll pay for it at the day of judgment. The Irishman said, be gorra, if its that long credit, I'll take another. I could not but smile and I turned my face to the straw. The young women who had been anxiously waiting me to get religion, screamed out, he has got religion, he has got religion. They bounced the poles, seized me, and drug me up, told me to shout, that the Lord had blessed you, we saw it from the smile upon your countenance. The Lord will damn you if you are too stubborn to own and praise him. They made such a noise that I could not be heard to tell them that they were mistaken and that I smiled at the anecdote of the preacher. (This is followed by other stories and some thoughts upon this character of religion.)

## CHAPTER 5

In swapping my interest in the land I owned in Alabama for a piece of land in Tennessee I got in debt and had to go and work upon the railroad as a contractor to raise the money to pay the debt. I worked there three years and graded within a fraction of one fourth of track from Tuscumbia to Decatur, some 40 miles, in North Alabama. If I would have kept whiskey and tobacco I could have speculated greatly on my hired hands. I could not conscientiously do it. Tobacco, I believe generally is injurious to the users of it. Whiskey, I prohibited from being brought to the shanty where we lodged. Drinking spirituous liquors is one of the great evils indulged in by unthought-ed mortals.

In 1836 I removed to Texas. When I determined to remove to Texas I made arrangements and first came on to look at the country. Brother John Northrup came with me. <sup>As</sup> We travelled on through White River swamp, we saw a large black bear, I reckon 200 yds from us, travelling toward

us. John said, I do not like for him to come any closer. I said, let us get a good look at him. When in about ten yards of us I moved my horse and spoke and the bear wheeled and ran away, though he seemed to go slowly. We crossed White River and got to a man's by the name of Wilder in the edge of the White River Prairie. We had to wait until night to cross the prairie, some 30 miles wide. The green prairie flies were so bad that a horse could not come through during the day. We went on and passed through Little Rock, the State Capital of Arkansas, a snug, flourishing town on the Arkansas River. Next day, brother John Northrup took sick. Next day he was better and we traveled on, but I could not prevail on him to take medicines. Next day he was worse again. He said I know I shall die and it grieves me to be buried away out here in this wild, hard hearted country. I said, brother John, we are here in the middle of our King's Dominions. He has the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possessions - just as well be buried here if it is the will of our King, as anywhere on earth.

(The story goes on in detail showing the many wandering and trials in Texas and between Texas and several trips back to Illinois; the death of his wife and later marriage etc etc. There are a number of sermons, showing a great familiarity with the scriptures and an unbounded faith in the Bible.)

The foregoing was copied from a typewritten copy which was given me by J. B. Hill, President L. & N. R. R. Company, Louisville, Kentucky. He was a first cousin to Abner Hill. He copied direct from the original. ... The original was written about 1861.

R. Voyt Hill  
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He got better; we went on. That night we got close room. I took him through a course of medicine, 1st I gave him sweating tea till the system was warmed up - then steam, then gave a pinch of lobelia (for vomiting). Next morning he was able to ride. We went on. It was about the first of July 1835. Red River was so high that we had to turn West and cross at lost prairie and go up between Sulphur fork and Red river - travelling away on a divide to get from high water. We were away from any settlement. I took sick - we came to water. I was compelled to be down. Brother John gave me a dose of Lobelia (for vomiting). It operated pretty well. He then mixed up and gave me a dose of a third preparation and it acted on me almost like electricity. It seemed to run to the ends of my fingers and toes. I set to vomiting, broke into a profuse sweat and in less than half an hour I vomited up everything that made me sick. I lay down and rested as well as cooling off, felt hungry, ate some and rode on that evening some 20 miles. I realized great advantage in the use of lobelia on that occasion. We went on up into Sulphur fork prairie and attempted to cross the Sulphur fork but the same was full covering the bottoms with water. We had both been sick and did not like to swim and this was all the chance for us to go on to Colorado River where we had started. We gave up going any farther - being well pleased with the Sulphur Fork prairie. We selected our locations and returned home intending immediately to move out to Texas. When brother John Northcross got home his father being well able to do so gave him 160 acres of good land in Mississippi and he declined coming to Texas. I went home to Tennessee, found my wife and daughter Sarah well. We set about fixing to remove. We got ready and started in Nov. and got out to Texas in Feb. 1836. There were quite a number of the Christian brethren moved to Texas and settled not very far apart. We got together and formed a church. There was old Bro. Joseph Matthews; one of the most honest

and pious men I ever knew; his son, M. W. Matthews, who has been one of my most untiring friends; major James Box and his friendly wife, Betsey Matthews, used to be one of the most liberal and friendly women that I ever knew; Amos C. C. Bailey and his wife, Nancy Matthews before marriage, was one of my old warm friends.

One one Lord's Day we had meeting at old Bro. Joseph Matthews - my horse ran half mile up the creek. I took my gun and went after the horses. When I got in sight of the horses I saw two deer near the horses. I shot one. It ran a little ways and lay down. The other deer did not leave it. I loaded my gun and shot it down. I took the horses home, got my son Joshua B. Hill to go with me, we brought both deer back home. After taking care of the deer we went to the meeting. A Baptist preacher who heard of it tried to make use of it to sink my influence. Since then he has not had much influence. I have made myself acquainted with the teachings of the Bible. I understand the Jewish sabbath and the Lord's day to be essentially different. The Jewish sabbath is Saturday or the 7th day. The Lord's day is Sunday or the first day of the week. It is the day to meet together for worship. Anything that does not prevent this (our worship), nor violated the law we are at liberty to do when real necessity requires it. John's testimony 6:31. Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written. He gave them bread from heaven to eat. This is written Ex 16:31 - 1491 years before Christ. To give the tribes of Israel bread from heaven was one of the great miracles performed by the Almighty to prove the truth of the Bible. The Jews after this long lapse of years speak of it as certain, and Jesus Christ assents to it as true. Most assuredly we have the plainest and most undoubted proof of the certainty of the foundation of our hope.



In a country like Texas was at that time where there were Indians, bears, panthers, and wolves it was necessary to carry a gun, and it was necessary to kill a deer when we needed the meat. This Baptist preacher, John V. Cherry, after a while became friendly, attended our meetings and went to his meetings (sic). In one of his sermons, Bro. M. W. Matthews and myself were present, Rev. Cherry preached that the Father made an eternal covenant with the Son in which all the elect were embraced and that Jesus Christ died only for the elect that were given to Christ in this eternal covenant. After preaching we staid until after dinner. I said to Cherry, where do we find in the Bible anything about this eternal covenant that you told us about today. He replied the Bible is full of it. Said I to him, The Bible lies by you on the table, please take the Bible and show me where it is named. He did not comply. Said to him, the Bible lies by you on the table, please do take the Bible and show me where it is named. He replied where a man had a good design, I have no objection to talking, but where the design is bad I don't want to talk. Said I, how do you know that my design is bad? He replied, I think you want to get something to make a handle of. Said I, I am not talking for my own sake, but for the sake of the uninformed persons present. I know that it is not in the Bible. I consider it a very destructive doctrine. It is calculated to lead those that believe it to destruction and I wanted the people to know that it is not in the Bible and therefore not true. He replied this is the first time that I was ever accused of preaching false doctrine. Well, said I, if it is in the Bible just turn to the place and show it. But although he had preached it and had said the Bible was full of it, he did not pretend to show it. I suppose that he knew that we could not show it in the Bible therefore he did not try. In the evening we rode together going home and agreed to be friendly though we differed in belief.

Sometime after this a man by the name of Hiram Jones and his wife were baptized and joined the Christian Church. Cherry hired Jones to dig a well.

While Jones and his wife were at Cherry's he said to Jones that he was surprised at Jones and his wife at joining so unpopular a church as the Christian Church; that the members were generally poor and the Church the most unpopular of any in all the country. When Jones saw me he told me what Cherry had said. When I met Cherry he was alone. I asked him if he did not think that he had violated his promise to me that we would be friendly in the way he talked to Jones. He got mad and said hard things of me and the Christian Church. It was in the forepart of the day that I talked to Cherry. That day I was riding alone and thinking on Rev: 17:14 - These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them. For he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful. I was inclined to poetry. I was inclined to singing. I composed a tune as nearly in the tone of voice of the Baptist that I had commonly heard in preaching as I could and then composed verses to sing to the tune - Here they are.

#### Fighting against the Lamb.

1. Come Christians all in armor bright  
Whose dress reflects celestial light  
Let's join to sing of glorious war  
And prove the Lamb both far and near.
2. The Dragon and his army fought  
In heaven but they prevailed not  
They fought against the Lamb, the Word,  
The King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
3. They that are with Him called, are  
They're chosen too - His name to bear  
They're faithful to his great command  
Come friends, behold the Marshall band.
4. The church when subject to the care  
Of Christ she is his bride most fair  
He is her husband and her head  
And thus she's forth to conquest led.
5. But when she took another head  
And from her lawful husband fled  
Then she became a harlot red  
And then she's forth a captive led.
6. On many waters she doth set  
Upheld by King, people and state  
She rides upon a scarlet beast  
On dainties rich behold her feast.



7. In lewdness see her bringing forth  
Her daughter's in the South and North  
They're harlots too although they're fair  
Reflecting friends say who they are.
8. She that receives another head  
Besides her spouse is basely led  
Although she owns her husband too  
Still she's a harlot all do know.
9. Though Synod, Council, Bishop, Pope  
Whose rules and power they keep up  
'Tis plain they take another head  
Than Him whose risen from the Dead.
10. And as the savior told their fate.  
They love the one, the other hate  
And thus they fight against the Lord  
And trample down the living word.
11. But though they fight they'll not prevail  
For all their skill and power must fail  
For Christ the Lamb will overcome  
And take his faithful children home.

Friend Cherry was rather unfortunate - sunk into disrepute and ended his days in gloom.

#### Chapter six

In the summer of 1838 we had some sickness in our family, and we concluded to go on a visit to Tenn. and then on to the State of Ill. Accordingly I made ready and with my wife and little daughter Sarah went on through the Choctaw Indian Nation - through Arkansas, Mo., Ill., Ky., and into White Co., Tenn, where my father, mother, oldest brother, Elijah, and my brother Winkfield lived. I staid with them perhaps a month and occasionally preached for them. My two brothers had never obeyed the gospel nor professed religion in any way, I was very anxious for them to obey the gospel, but we had been raised under the influence of the Baptist doctrine and this wretched belief had a decided influence upon my two dear loving brothers. They would say, what can I do. I cannot believe of myself. I cannot repent of myself. Let the Lord operate upon me and help me to believe and repent. For me to undertake just of myself and try to do right would be phariseical. I could not prevail upon either brother Elijah or

brother Winkfield to obey the gospel and to lay hold of the hope set before them. So they continued to live and finally died, both of them, without confessing the Lord before men that he might confess them before His father and the Holy Angels. This wretched belief that it is necessary for the abstract spirit of God to operate upon a sinner before he can believe or obey the gospel acceptably is one of the most fatal delusions of Satan to cause people to neglect the gospel of salvation. We read Heb. 2:3-4. John 14:16, John 16:7-13, 1 John 5:11 He that believeth not God had made Him (God) a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave the son. The gospel is preached to every creature for the obedience of faith. See Mark 16:16, Rom. 1:5, If my beloved brothers Elijah and Winkfield could have been gotten to understand the gospel they would have seen that it was their privilege as well as their bounden duty to believe upon Jesus Christ - to repent turning away from all sin, to confess the savior before me and to have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. They might have laid hold of eternal life but poor dear ignorant souls. They were ignorant and I hope the Lord will wink at their ignorance and have mercy upon them. Alas I fear that there are thousands now living in a similar condition and there are many poor ignorant blinded preachers preaching it and warning the people against that which is plain gospel truth. Jesus says - Math. 15:14, 1 Tim. 4:16.

Having remained as long as I wished to with my relatives in the State of Tenn., I went on to my brother, William Hill in the state of Ill. There I found two parties of professed christians viz; they that called themselves the old Christian church and those that the world falsely call "Campbellites". I got acquainted with an old Christian preached called Elder John Scott. This man was truly ignorant and biggoted. He contended that the sinner had to repent before he could believe. In vain I quoted to him Heb. 11:6.

I spent the summer and fall of 1839 in Ill. and towards the last of Nov.



started back to Texas. I stopped and staid all night with a brother True near Rushville. He took the millineal Harbenger. He had just gotten the late number of the Milineal Harbenger. In it Bro. Campbell contends that the name Disciple is the best name for us to be called by and argued that the name Christian is not a divinely inspired name. It has always seemed strange to me that Bro. Campbell always seemed to oppose the belief that the name Christian was given by divine inspiration. The name Christian was first given at Antioch by the Church at Jerusalem. - Bro. Campbell loves to work in the lead. I have also noticed that we have not had anything from the pen of Bro. Campbell against our being falsely called Campbellites. I have desired Bro. Campbell would come out plainly and let us know his mind on this - whether or not he is willing for the christians that are in fellowship with him to be called campbellites. Now I think the name is a positive falsehood given to reproach us as professed christians. All intelligent christians must know that Alexander Campbell was not crucified for us. They also know that they were not baptized in the name of Alexander Campbell. Therefore to call an intelligent christian a Campbellite is an invidious falsehood and in its nature very wicked. Bro. Campbell may have written on this subject, but if he has I have not seen it. I came to Texas and attended to my land business and in the spring of 1840 went back to Ill. I found my wife whom I had left with her sister Sally Hill, my brother, William Hill's wife. I found my dear Katherine very sick. She seemed to get better and got well enough to go about. But she began to have the dropsy of the flesh. I tried common remedies. It did no good. I tried the steam treatment without any apparent benefit. I sent to a urine doctor, she used his medicine. The swelling increased. I then went to an old regular doctor and brought him to her - still she got worse. When the time came for her to die she was fully sensible of it. It did not seem to have any effect on her - only brighten her happy prospects

in the spirit world. Her intellect seemed to improve. Her mind was brighter and stronger than I had ever witnessed it. She called up her little daughter, Sarah, to her bedside and said to her. I have often told you that I must die and leave you before long, and now the time has come I am dying. You will not have any mother to watch over you and give you good advice. I want you never to forget my love and kindness to you, my little daughter. As you will not have any mother to advise you, I want you always to take the advice of old women, they will always advise you for your good. Then she said to her sister, here Sally, I give Sarah to you. Our little daughter, Sarah, was about 4 years old. Her dying mother seemed calm and self-possessed entirely free from motherly sympathy. She seemed at times delighted with songs of celestial spirits. She seemed at times to be enabled to look across the space that separated her from the glories of paradise. I had long believe the gospel and had confidently believed its promises to the christian. But this had the effect to strengthen my confidence in the blessings of our heavenly father to his faithful children in the hour of death. My wife truly seemed to fall asleep in Jesus. O, how comfortable is the promise of God in Rev. 14:13 and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: write blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from their labors and their works do follow them. I was now about 52 years old. I continued to ride round and preach in the country. We formed a christian church at Bro. William Hill's house in Fulton, Co., Ill, where my wife died.

Among those who professed to become a christian was a woman whose name was Delila Martin. She was a widow of about the age of 35 years. She professed faith in Christ and I baptized her. She had two children - a girl and a boy - and lived in the neighborhood. The arrangement was made for me to have night meeting once a week at her home. She seemed sensible and smart and very friendly to me - became somewhat interesting. I become disposed to cultivate her acquaintance. One night after meeting I staid until all the people were gone and we were alone only with the two children. I told her that I was pleased with her appear-



ance and would like to have a further acquaintance and she seemed much pleased and invited me to stay till after supper. I staid, we talked - I proposed marriage. She seemed decidedly willing. I proposed if we got married that we would live in all things according to the teachings of the new testament. To this she gave decided assent. We continued our acquaintance until we got married. I found that she was irreconcilably opposed to child bearing and would not consent to any mode of intercourse but that which would preclude the possibility of pregnancy. To this I would not agree believing it wicked and she became unwilling to sleep with me in the same bed. I found that she had no disposition to do as we had agreed to do - live according to the teachings of the new testament. I proposed that we would lay the matter before the church and that if she opposed to live irreconcilibly a married life that I would leave her. She was unwilling to do so, then became very commonly friendly and became pregnant. She had a daughter, she called it Betsy Melinda. It lived to some three years old, a most interesting child, but it died. I went to Texas, staid nearly a year. When I came home I brought a sack of feathers, dresses for her and Ann, her daughter and things for her boy, Joseph. She again became consciously friendly and again became pregnant. From that time she seemed to adopt the principle that old birds are not to be caught with chaff. The child was born. It was a son. She called him Abner James. She was an Eastern woman and there were yankee females in the neighborhood who were her acquaintances. I thought that they influenced her to be unfriendly and resolved to take her to Texas. She refused to go. I told her that I had borne with her ill treatment to me until forbearance was no longer a virtue, that if she would not go with me I would publish the facts as they had existed with us in the Fulton Democrat, a newspaper printed at Canton, Ill, six miles from us and that I would take the baby and leave her. Rather than have me do this she agreed to go with me to Texas. I made ready and we departed for

Texas. She remained in Texas about 8 months, but in all this time she was as unfriendly as she could possibly be. She tried every way to insult me continually so that I might be disposed to be friendly with her.

We made arrangements to remove from Texas, but when we got back to Ill. she went into the place upon which she had a lifetime dower and entirely drew off from me. I first thought I would force her to go as I had done before by taking the child. But she positively declared that it was not my child and that I need not want it. I believed she lied though it was so much to her disgrace. The great desire to keep her child caused her to do it. I advised with my old preaching friends in that country and they advised me to let her be. That if I forced her to go with me that she would render me miserable through life. I concluded to do so. I bought her a new bed (we had left one bed in Texas). I bought her a good lot of provisions and concluded to let her keep the child until he was large enough leave her. I left her feeling that I was a free from her according to the word of God as if I had never known her as a wife and came on bringing my daughter, Sarah, to Texas.

#### Chapter 7.

When I came to Texas I concluded it was necessary for me to have a divorce from her. I had considerable of land I wanted to sell and I supposed that to make the title good she as my wife would have to assign my dower, so I concluded to obtain a divorce. I brought suit. Upon examining the law I found that there are three causes for which a divorce can be obtained - 1st for adultery or fornication; 2nd three years dissection; 3rd a course of insufferable treatment. On the third cause I rested my case and her treatment to me during the eight months that I had her in Texas when proved enabled me to obtain a divorce. But am I not at liberty to marry another woman if I wish to do so? I decided from the word of God I am free to marry if I wished to do so - Matt. 19:9 - And I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication and shall marry another comitteth adultery. This woman had said to me, "This

child is none of yours," which was to say to me, I have been guilty of fornication. I thought she lied, but could not be certain of it. Mark 10:12 - my wife put me away and not me her, and though she professed to believe, yet her conduct proved that she did not believe 1 Cor. 7:15 Matt. 10:10. To me it appears that Christ in this connection teaches that none but a eunuch can receive the saying to do without a wife. A eunuch is a castrated man, similar to a gelding. A gelding does not care anything for a mare. A eunuch does not care anything for a woman. He that is not a eunuch cannot do without a wife without becoming unclean and uncleanness is highly condemned Eph 5:5. The unclean person is defiled in dreaming of self-abuse. See the teaching of the law of Moses on the subject of defilement or uncleanness. When I first commenced riding and preaching I got acquainted with Bro. Joseph Matthews in Madison Co., Ala., and industrious, friendly, and liberal man. I also became attached to his wife, Peninah, a mild friendly liberal woman. Their children then were nearly all small. I considered their family of children a very interesting family. Their third daughter, Nancy, was then a small girl very mild and handsome. She grew up. She professed faith. I baptized her in Spring Creek in Franklin County, Ala. when she was first married to her husband, Amos C. C. Bailey. I performed their marriage ceremony. She became the mother of 10 children and was still the same mild, handsome, and interesting person. Bailey was now dead and she was a widow. I was decided that of all the women that I knew on earth she was my choice for a wife. I named the subject to her and wrote to her the following acrostic, "Abner Hill loves Nancy Bailey" as follows:

A man may love a woman well  
 But backward be this truth to tell,  
 Nor dare the subject soft to move  
 Ere he the ladies mind can prove  
 Reciprocate connubial love.

He that is bound by words of fate  
 Is in a most unhappy state  
 Like the deserted dove forlorn  
 Lives isolated, but no home.

Ladies are modest things we know  
 Our minds to them we have to show

Verses acrostic this may do  
 e'en though they blush to have it  
 Soliloquies these things will show.

No gospel bands are binding me.  
 According to the word we see  
 Nothing that says I may love  
 Concerning whom my thoughts approve  
 Yet prudence says with caution move.

But should your thoughts with mine agree  
 And you reciprocate with me  
 I will then say I opine  
 Long rolls the steady wheels of time  
 Ere I am thine, and thou art mine  
 Yet we should not be too sanguine.

For us to get married seemed to meet her decided approbation. Accordingly we were married. Both her children and mine were opposed to our getting married. The first year we lived on and attended her place on White Oak. I found that the land was too poor to make a living on. The next year we removed on to South Sulphur fork of Red River. While we lived there I was told that there was taking place very uncommon extraordinary things. That the spirits of dead people were acting in connection with spiritual mediums - in raising chairs and tables and making them rap in answer to questions that was asked of them on spiritual things. I was anxious to learn something about it. I went to Sulphur Springs on business. I saw an old Baptist preacher by the name of Smith. I asked him about the spirituals rapping. If it was there. He said yes and that he and his son William were both mediums. I told him that I wanted to witness it. He said "Come into William's shop." He was a turner by trade. We went in. William Smith, the old preacher, his father set a chair upon the work bench. Here said the old man, "William, stick this nail in the crack before the forepost, and I will stick the point of my knife before this post to hold the chair steady." They then laid their hands on the chair and the old man said, "If there is a spirit or spirits present who are willing to communicate with us today - let them raise the chair and give one rap." I asked them to get the spirits to rap how old I am. They tried and failed. The



tried again and failed. They tried a third time and failed. The old man said the spirits of the dead do not know all things after they are dead. They are ignorant while living. I thought it was William and he that were guessing at my age and making the chair rap. If it had really been the spirits what was the need of this nail and point of his knife before the bottom of the foreposts on the chair. When they bore a little on the chair and pulled a little forward to raise the hind posts of the chair, the forepart would slip to them. Had it been spirits that were raising the chair, it was not reasonable to suppose that they would have shoved the chair forward. I looked on and asked the spirits a number of questions. This old Baptist Smith had then written on the coming of what he called the millennial Judgment. According to his calculations which he had written in his book it was to be I think about 80 years until the millennial Judgment. The old man seemed disposed to prove by the spirits that his calculations were correct. He asked them a number of questions and the spirits that did not my age seemed to know all about the second coming of Christ. Although Jesus Christ had said Mark 13:32 - But of that day and that hour knoweth no man - no not the angels which are in heaven neither the Son, but the Father. In one instance he asked the spirits if John the Baptist baptized the people that came to him by immersion - raise the chair and give one rap. The chair rapped hard. I then asked if the 3000 that were baptized on the day of Pentacost were baptized that their sins might be remitted, raise the chair and give one rap. He then asked if they were baptized because their sins were remitted, raise the chair and give one rap. The spirits raised the chair and rapped hard.

Some time after this I was invited to stay all night with the Baptist preacher, Fisher. I did so. We talked considerably, but we did not agree in our beliefs in many things. Soon we shall have to end our mortal life. I reckon that the great thing with us is for each one of us so to live as to make

his calling and election sure. He answers, yes this is the main thing. I saw that I had forgotten my spur and said I must step into the house and get my spur. He followed me saying, but the apostle does not mean our salvation after death when he says make your calling and election sure. O, dear, said I, you are like a cow that gave a good pail of milk and kicked it over. You have ruined your serious friendly confession made at the gate. Good morning!, so I left him.

Sometimes after this I was at a Baptist meeting on Clear Creek, Denton County. I wanted to give out the appointment when Bro. Beebe and I were to attend and I did it in the following manner. I will inform the people that Bro. Beebe and I have an appointment to preach at a school house near Bro. George Reels at a such time. We expect to constitute a church of God, a church as we read of in the New Testament. I did this for the information of our Baptist friends. I was engaged in cultivating a piece of land at cousin George Reels. In laying my crop of corn by I worked in the heat and injured myself and after a while I took the chills and fever. Though they seemed light, they reduced me and could not get them cured. I thought that at Gainesville was a very disagreeable place for me to be sick at. I would by lying sick in a back room sometimes frenzied with fever and my wife and children would be going on singing carnal songs and at their fun and sometimes not even know I was sick. I determined to travel in my buggy down to my sons, Joshua B. Hill in Parker County, Texas, Though I was constantly taking medicine of some sort. I did not get well till nearly spring. While I was sick at my sons Joshua B. Hill, in Parker County, my mind was engaged in close humble prayerful self-examination. I had for many years at times been doubtful of the correctness of my baptism, but it seems to me that when I investigated my baptism I only looked at it on one side.

Well I will confess the Lord and obey as soon as I can get the opportunity. Though I was quite poorly I started out to find a church of God and a legal administrator. This found on Patricks creek and Sanchez creek in Parker County. Bro. Emberson was older of the Church and although the night was cold and dark

we went down to Patrick's creek in Parker Co., Texas. There I confessed the Lord and was buried with him in baptism that I might rise with him through faith of the operation of God - Col 2:12; that I might walk with Him in newness of Life. Rom 6:4. While I remained in Parker County I found that the Baptist in some places were wielding considerable influence.

I was in the practice of preaching at Bro. Brooks on the head of Grindstone Creek. When I arrived at the place of my appointment at Bro. Brooks I found a baptist preacher, Turner, there. He is considered the greatest baptist preacher in all the region of this country. I invited him to take part with me in the meeting. He declined and now I had the choice of doing it in the presence of the baptist preacher. I determined to investigate Acts 2:2 - Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. I first showed that according to the rule of english grammar that repent and be baptized were joined together by the copulative conjunction and that the words joined together in this way were for the same thing; that if repent was in order to remission of sins, so was baptism, for they are joined together grammatically for the same thing. But knowing that although Turner was considered a big baptist preacher yet he does not understand the english grammar.

On the next Sunday, I did not have any appointment. The baptist had meeting up at Soda Springs - 5 miles above Joshua's where I was staying. I went up to their meeting. Mr. Turner was there and I expect that he had gotten proof and arguments arranged and that I would hear something from him about my last Sunday's sermon. Mr. Turner was put up to preach. He did not even hint at my argument that I had used the Sunday before, but took for his text Mat 9:12 - "They that be whole need not a physician but they that are sick - "

For as much as we understand that there are unfavorable impressions on some minds relative to the marriage of Elder Abner Hill to his present wife, we deem it due the cause of truth and innocence to give a statement on that subject. We have a knowledge of the ground upon which Elder Hill obtained a divorce, and we are clearly of the opinion that Elder Hill was at liberty to marry again according to the law of Christ, if he chose to do so. The woman from whom he obtained a divorce exercised towards him a course of insufferable treatment. She then drew off and would not live with him and when he talked of taking the child, she told him that he need not want the child for it was none of his. We were members of the church on White Oak with Elder Hill and his wife at the time of their marriage and present when they got married. Elder Jesse Goodman performed the marriage ceremony. Some months after this marriage a respectable brother said publicly in a public congregation that he could not cooperate with Elder Hill. He lived some 20 miles away. Elder Hill then wrote to him informing him of the time of our monthly meetings and calling on him to attend and present his charge or charges and sustain them, or he would expect him to make any acknowledgment as public as was his statement of non-cooperation that he might so far as possible heal the wound that he had inflicted on his christian character. The said Elder attended our church meeting but he did not present any charge. The subject of Elder Hill's marriage was investigated in the church and the said elder said that Elder Hill had not transgressed any law of Christ in marrying. The brethren should be careful now they receive reports about an elder or an evangelist lest they prevent his usefulness and shut the Kingdom of God against men.

M. Walter Matthews - Evangelist  
Jesse Goodman, Elder.

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